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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 2, 2020

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The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States Capitol  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington D.C., 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

As we enter the month of September, we face a somber milestone and a critical deadline. This month will mark half a year since the House and Senate collaborated to pass three robust legislative responses to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. September also brings the end of the fiscal year and the threat of a government shutdown. As the House returns to session this month, I write to you again to urge you to bring up legislation that not only averts a preventable political crisis, but also moves us closer to a deal on COVID-19 aid.

I am deeply disappointed that negotiations with the Senate and White House have reportedly ground to a halt more than a month after necessary support like enhanced unemployment benefits and the eviction moratorium expired. And I know you have made offers to these negotiators to meet in the middle on a package to demonstrate our willingness to compromise. I believe it is our duty as legislators to both tell and show that we are committed to helping those still at risk from this pandemic and its economic effects – and continue to pass legislation to support Americans during this time.

I have spoken with Iowa's workers, small business owners, health care professionals, parents, teachers, seniors, and local leaders about how this pandemic has affected them. My constituents and millions of Americans are depending on us to reach an agreement that delivers enhanced unemployment, COVID-19 testing, rental and homeowner assistance, aid for our small businesses, funding for hospitals and schools, and the help our state and local governments need to survive. And they are relying on us to prevent adding a government shutdown to these already difficult times.

While it feels like a lifetime ago, it was only 21 months ago when I came to Congress in the middle of the longest government shutdown in U.S. history. I remember the pain and incredulity I heard in my constituents' voices when I talked to them about the crisis that I had only just inherited. In that moment, as many families suffered and our economy lost \$11 billion,<sup>1</sup> the House refused to accept stalled negotiations and began passing bills that many of us had not even had a hand in writing<sup>2</sup> in

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/01/28/government-shutdown-cost-the-economy-11-billion-cbo.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rollcall.com/2019/01/17/house-democrats-latest-gambit-for-ending-shutdown-involves-bills-republicans-negotiated/>

order to break the gridlock. We showed the country we were committed to making progress, and eventually we did.

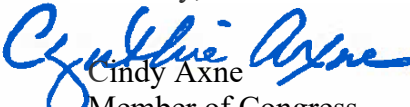
The House must demonstrate that commitment again by bringing a new bill to the table – one that includes the same foundation of aid we have fought for in negotiations and in our previous bills – to insist that we continue working towards a compromise.

On March 27<sup>th</sup> – nearly six months ago – the CARES Act became law, back when there were less than 100,000 recorded COVID-19 cases in the United States. Today, there are more than 6 million cases, nearly 200,000 lives lost, and more than 25 million Americans out of work. The need for additional assistance has only grown – especially in Iowa where COVID-19 cases are reaching record highs and a recent natural disaster has pushed our families and municipal governments into tighter financial situations. If we can pass a bill that includes only the aid we absolutely need – and reject unrelated provisions like funding an FBI building or opening aid programs to special interests – we can be that much closer to a final deal that our Republican colleagues must accept.

I know that these negotiations are unlike any other we have faced. And with some Republicans claiming that the pandemic is in the past,<sup>3</sup> there are certainly no fewer obstacles than there were last month.

But without action that both averts a government shutdown and secures additional COVID-19 aid, the families and communities that I represent will face the next six months of this pandemic with much less confidence than they had in March that help is coming to keep a roof over their heads, food on their table, and their community from financial ruin.

Sincerely,

  
Cindy Axne  
Member of Congress

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/larry-kudlow-top-trump-adviser-pandemic-past-tense-rnc-deaths-2020-8>